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ABSTRACT

This document is designed to help adult and community learning (ACL) services across the United Kingdom complete the annual self-assessment reports (SARs). The guide begins with background information on the purposes of self-assessment, the new context of ACL and the elements and format of the new SARs. The remaining four sections examine the following steps in the self-assessment process: (1) preparing for self-assessment (establishing why self-assessment is being conducted, what will be self-assessed, and when and how the self-assessment will be conducted); (2) conducting self-assessment (identifying and systematically gathering key evidence, identifying strengths and weaknesses, drafting the SAR, deciding grades, moderating and validating judgments/grades, and agreeing on changes); (3) development planning (producing a development plan, obtaining required approval, monitoring actions systematically, reporting on progress regularly, updating the development plan); and (4) reviewing the self assessment and development planning process (identifying whom to consult and needed changes in the process). The following items are appended: (1) the Adult Learning Inspectorate areas of learning and inspection with examples of adult education courses; (2) Learning and Skills Council (LSC) criteria for effective self-assessment; (3) a checklist for preparing for self-assessment and development planning; (4) LSC criteria for effectiveness development planning; and (5) a list of 23 sources of further information. (MN)

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learning and skills development agency

self-assessment and development planning

for adult and community learning providers

Mike Kenway and Anna Reisenberger

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A 3-year programme to support ACL providers to meet quality requirements of inspection and funding agencies and improve their provision. It is run by the Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) in partnership with the National Institute of Adult and Continuing Education (NIACE) and is funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). The programme includes an advice and information service, a website, quality improvement networks, staff development workshops and consultancy, development projects and case studies. Details of the programme, extra copies of this guide and back-up materials are available on the website www.qualityACL.org.uk

Further guides and workshops are planned on:

- managing the observation of teaching and learning
- equal opportunities
- getting learner feedback
- involving part-time staff in the quality agenda
- fit-for-purpose systems for small providers.

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for adult and community learning providers

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Note
The Learning and Skills Development Agency
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Contents

Introduction		1
Background		3
What is self-assessment?		3
The new context		4
What should the report look like?		6
Coverage		8
Preparing for self-assessment		9
Getting started		9
Training and communication		12
Local authorities who secure provision through contacts		13
Carrying out self-assessment		15
Gathering the evidence		15
Interpreting data		20
Drafting the report		22
The next step – development planning		31
Identifying the critical issues		32
Drawing up the plan		33
Monitoring the plan		36
Reviewing the process		37
Appendix 1	ALI/Ofsted areas of learning and inspection	38
Appendix 2	LSC criteria for effective self-assessment	41
Appendix 3	Preparing for self-assessment and development planning: a checklist	42
Appendix 4	LSC criteria for effective development planning	45
Appendix 5	Further sources of information and advice	47

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Introduction

This guide is the first in a series to help adult and community learning (ACL) services meet the requirements and challenges of the new post-16 learning environment. It takes account of the new requirements of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). Guidance from both organisations will continue to be developed over 2001/02.

The Learning and Skills Act (2000) consolidated a process that has already become established in parts of the post-compulsory sector – self-assessment for continuous improvement, backed up by regular inspections. In some parts of the ACL sector, self-assessment processes are familiar as part of different quality systems, such as PQASSO, Investors in People, Chartermark and Best Value. An analysis of adult learning plans (Merton, 2001) for 2001/02 showed that half the LEAs support part-time tutors with regular lesson observations.

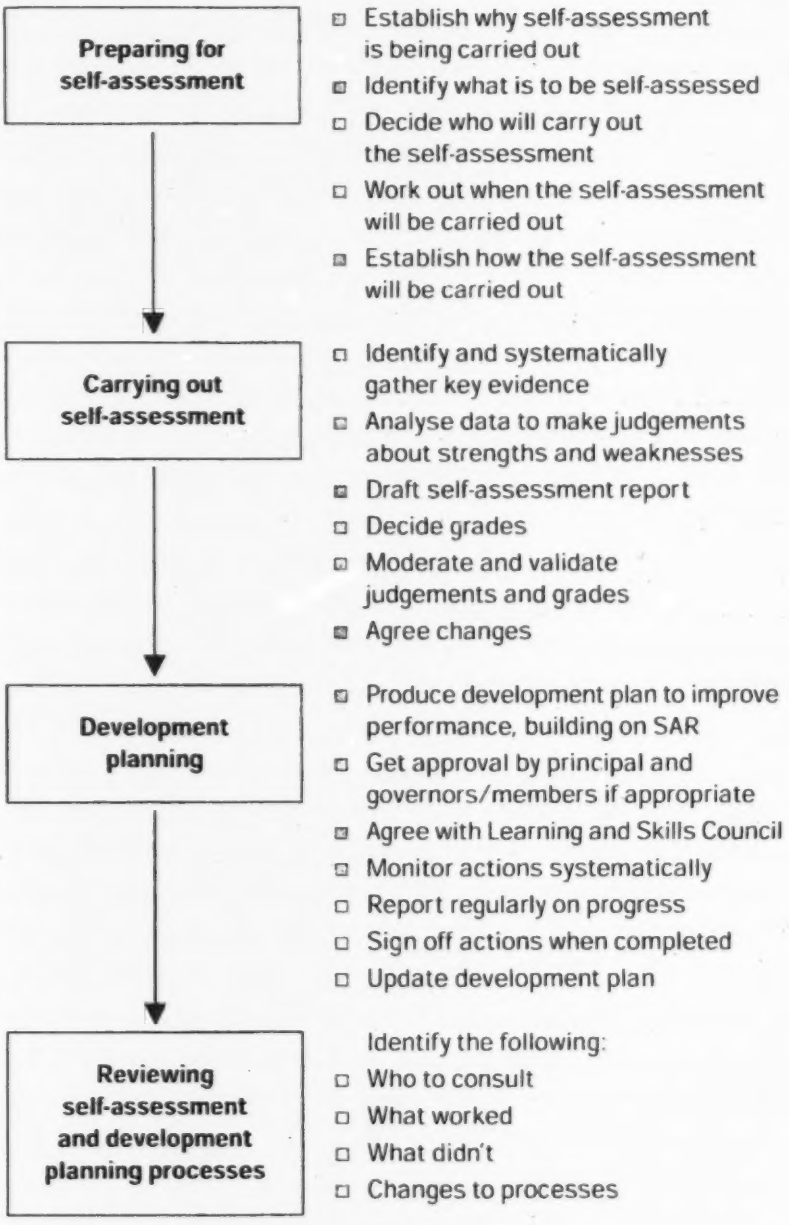
The new requirements mean that all ACL services must undertake an annual self-assessment of the quality of their provision and produce a development plan showing how they will improve that quality. This guide is designed to inform and support senior managers, curriculum leaders, administrators and others contributing to the annual self-assessment report (SAR) and development plan. It can be used to support training for staff contributing to the SAR and to help design internal documents and procedures. Further materials used in training workshops on self-assessment and development planning are available from the ACL Quality Support Programme (www.qualityACL.org.uk).

The guide has been arranged in a sequence that matches the tasks and decisions to be followed for the successful completion of the SAR and development plan. In outline this is:

- preparing for self-assessment
- carrying out self-assessment
- producing a development plan
- reviewing the whole process.

Figure 1 summarises this process.

Figure 1 The process of self-assessment


Preparing for self-assessment
Establish why self-assessment is being carried out
Identify what is to be self-assessed
Decide who will carry out the self-assessment
Work out when the self-assessment will be carried out
Establish how the self-assessment will be carried out
Carrying out self-assessment
Identify and systematically gather key evidence
Analyse data to make judgements about strengths and weaknesses
Draft self-assessment report
Decide grades
Moderate and validate judgements and grades
Agree changes
Development planning
Produce development plan to improve performance, building on SAR
Get approval by principal and governors/members if appropriate
Agree with Learning and Skills Council
Monitor actions systematically
Report regularly on progress
Sign off actions when completed
Update development plan
Reviewing self-assessment and development planning processes
Identify the following:
Who to consult
What worked
What didn't
Changes to processes

Background

What is self-assessment?

Self-assessment is a structured way of involving staff in evaluating provision. It must have a firm basis in evidence. It is not just about proving quality, but improving it; helping you to pinpoint what needs improving. It is a systematic way of:

- reviewing your performance against agreed goals and targets
- comparing your performance against previous years and that of other providers
- identifying strengths and weaknesses and therefore areas for improvement and development
- identifying and responding to the needs of learners and other groups
- bringing together all the activity that contributes to quality assurance arrangements
- preparing for LSC reviews and for inspection.

Self-assessment should be integral to organisational development, with the SAR and the development plan linked to strategic plans (like the LEA Adult Learning Plan) and operational planning. It should be a process that underpins continuous improvement, giving you an opportunity to reflect on how what you do (your activities) links to what you want to achieve (to improve the learning experiences of learners in your community). It helps point the way to what you can do better and which parts of the organisation need support and development.

The new context

The SAR should reflect your organisation's goals and the needs of your learners. But it also needs to take into account the needs of the LSC and the inspectorates. All providers funded through the LSC will be inspected according to the Common Inspection Framework (CIF) at least once every 4 years. The Adult Learning Inspectorate will inspect all LEA and voluntary sector adult education, on a 4-year cycle starting April 2002. The ALI will pilot inspections in 10 centres between October 2001 and March 2002. It will then revise its draft guidance (available at www.ali.gov.uk) on how to interpret the Common Inspection Framework for adult education. An SAR will form an important part of the evidence inspectors look at.

As part of its quality improvement strategy, the LSC also requires LEAs and other providers to produce an annual SAR based on the CIF requirements, and some additional LSC quality requirements. Local LSC staff will **assess** the rigour of the processes and evidence in the SAR. Providers also have to produce a development plan that outlines their quality improvement strategy, and the LSCs will **approve** this. LEA adult education services have to produce their first SAR and development plan by March 2002.

The Common Inspection Framework is built around seven key questions (as shown in Figure 2, opposite). Each has additional evaluation criteria; these are detailed in the published *Common Inspection Framework* (on www.ali.gov.uk).

The additional LSC requirements are summarised next to each question in Figure 2; for further details see pages 11–14 in *Raising standards in post-16 learning: self-assessment and development plans* (on www.lsc.gov.uk).

Ofsted and the Adult Learning Inspectorate will inspect and report on 14 'areas of learning' designed to include all curriculum and occupational areas. The Adult Learning Inspectorate has produced a list of courses including adult education courses from assertiveness to woodwork, and the area in which they are located (see Appendix 1).

Figure 2 The Common Inspection Framework and LSC requirements

Common Inspection Framework	Key LSC/ES aspects of quality
Achievement and standards	
▫ How well do learners achieve?	Accurate data on how retention, achievement, progression are addressed
Quality of education and training	
▫ How effective are teaching training and learning? ▫ How are achievement and learning affected by resources? ▫ How effective are the assessment and monitoring of learning? ▫ How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs and interests of learners? ▫ How well are learners guided and supported?	Up-to-date staff development plan, health and safety plans, and systems
Leadership and management	
▫ How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	Statements of learning entitlement Take account of LSC strategy and targets Implement national and local priorities Ensure systematic review of improvement processes Maintain good working relationships with LSC/ES and key partners and customers Have good systems for feedback Promote equal opportunities and close equality gaps

What should the report look like?

The SAR should meet your needs. The LSC suggests using the format for inspection reports as a useful structure for organising the content and meeting requirements. Another useful model for structuring an SAR is provided by the Essex Adult Education Service *Self assessment handbook* (April 2001).

A format is suggested below but you will probably need to adapt it. Large LEAs may well require reports from individual organisations as part of the quality assurance arrangements in contracts. The SAR might therefore include subsections from different sites or localities or include a section by each contracted provider, with a main section drawing everything together.

Funding for ACL provision can come from a variety of sources other than the LSC but in most cases some form of reporting on performance will be required. It is best to produce one SAR covering all that you do. It makes more sense, and saves time, to look at quality issues holistically. You can then highlight sections to satisfy the quality requirements of different stakeholders.

A format, based on ALI inspection reports

Section 1 Introduction or background section to the report

This will include:

- details about the provider and its work
- main aims/purposes/mission
- location and any significant features that affect provision
- number and range of learners
- programmes offered
- funding arrangements
- local/regional employment data and relevant retention and achievement data
- description of the provider's self-assessment process
- a table of grades including one for leadership and management.

ALI reports will give contributory grades under leadership for equality of opportunity and for quality assurance; and individual grades for each area of learning.

Section 2 Reports on areas of learning

There should be a brief report on each curriculum area covering:

- a brief overview of the provision
- key strengths
- key weaknesses (and other areas for improvement)
- evidence (to back up these judgements)
- a table of observation grades (where appropriate)
- a table showing performance over the past 2 or 3 years (where available)
- a grade for the provision.

ACL providers will need to look at how reports on areas of learning are brought together. Where more than one of the 14 areas of learning are managed together separate grades might be shown leading to one overall grade for the reporting area. Where sub-reports are submitted by location or centre heads in large contracting LEAs it could be helpful if those reports were built up against agreed common curriculum headings.

If there is a particular target group or special programme (eg family learning), you may wish to produce a report on it and cross-reference it to the areas of learning. Equally, a small provider might produce an overall report carefully cross-referenced to the appropriate areas of learning.

Section 3 Report on leadership and management

This section should include:

- an overall judgement on the quality of leadership and management
- how this contributes to learner achievement
- strengths and weaknesses
- an overall grade
- judgements about equal opportunities and quality assurance with a contributory grade for each.

You may wish to report on cross-service units like adult guidance here, but remember that guidance and support issues are covered in the key area of teaching and learning (CIF questions 2–6) as are equal opportunities.

Coverage

All sections should address the LSC requirements as well as the Common Inspection Framework.

Many ACL providers will be undertaking self-assessment for the first time and will go on to improve their reporting in subsequent years. There are, however, some key factors to bear in mind from the beginning:

- Self-assessment should deal with all aspects of provision, in particular the quality of the learners' experiences and the standards they achieve. A key aim of the new arrangements is that 'the interests of the learner come first and are of paramount importance ... placing the learner at the heart of the system' (*Raising standards in post-16 learning*, March 2001, page 10, paragraph 33).
- Providers must **address** all the quality statements in the Common Inspection Framework and the LSC/Employment Service quality and financial probity requirements (although you do not have to **report** point by point against every statement).
- The ALI draft guidance on inspection for providers gives initial interpretation of the Common Inspection Framework for adult and community learning (pages 58–74). This will be revised as a result of pilot inspections in a range of ACL providers.
- Self-assessment should be responsive to the quality improvement strategies of the LSC framework for provider performance review.
- More detail will be available from your local learning and skills council.

Appendix 2 gives a summary of the LSC criteria for effective self-assessment.

Preparing for self-assessment

Getting started

Where to begin?

There are a number of things you can do to prepare for writing your SAR:

- Set aside some quality time to prepare a work plan.
- Make sure you are aware of the LSC and ALI requirements (see documentation provided by the LSC and the Adult Learning Inspectorate, and the publications listed at the back of this booklet).
- Start at the end and consider what the SAR might look like and who will have contributed to the report.
- Write a checklist of everything that needs to be included, what will be self-assessed and who to inform. (Some lateral thinkers start off with a mind map that then leads into a checklist.)
- Work back from your deadline and note the key dates for completing various parts of the SAR and data gathering.
- Consider what you need to do to pull together an integrated SAR involving a **task** focus for everyone in the organisation while taking into account **people** issues (anxiety about change, individual expertise, time, etc).

Appendix 3 provides a checklist for preparing for self-assessment and development planning.

Who to inform?

The short answer to this key question is everyone! Staff at all levels, including part-timers and volunteers, should be encouraged to reflect on their own area of work and identify areas for improvement. Staff can be briefed through staff meetings, tutor handbook and training days. Some staff, like centre heads or curriculum coordinators, may need to know their responsibilities as soon as possible if they have a team leader role (see 'Drafting the report: involving staff', page 22).

All staff need to be aware of the benefits of self-assessment, how they will contribute and what systems are being put in place to support the process.

The process must be effectively led and managed. Within small providers this might be by the principal/chief executive/project director working with a small team of key staff or volunteers. In larger providers and LEAs another senior manager, with authority and close access to the head of the service, could undertake the lead responsibility. In some cases it will be appropriate to establish a group that has oversight and a reporting role.

Governors, management committee members, LEA officers and elected members will need to be involved in relation to their responsibilities for raising standards and improving organisational effectiveness and efficiency.

You are also expected to demonstrate how you have involved learners through feedback processes such as course evaluations, surveys, questionnaires, focus groups and complaints procedures. Where this is underdeveloped you could start with a sample of learners. One way to make learners' involvement clear in future is by including information on how learners contribute to self-assessment in the 'Statement of learner entitlement'.

When?

After the first year, most education providers will view the end of the academic year as the logical point and will be aiming to publish their SAR in the early autumn (adding in appropriate achievement data). If an alternative end of year is decided upon (which may be the case when ACL is only part of an organisation's purpose) you will need to ensure that all parts of the process can work to that date.

Ideally, you should spread activities over the year to ease workload. Schedules should be set for key tasks such as:

- observation of teaching and learning
- gathering of data
- internal validation of grades
- collecting views of learners.

Lesson observation could be managed by observing a percentage of classes each term, or by setting a caseload for each curriculum head or trained assessor. Learner evaluation and feedback should occur throughout the year as well as at the end. Nothing should be left to the last minute, since this goes against both the spirit and practice of self-assessment and continuous improvement!

As well as linking the self-assessment process into these regular quality assurance activities, connections should be made with strategic and other planning. As the outcome of the SAR will be an annual development plan, you will need to establish how this will affect organisational change and development.

Self-assessment should deal with **all** aspects of the organisation's activity. A flowchart or list showing the key dates and activities to be completed in the year is useful for tracking activity and making the connections to other reviews and plans; it is also a helpful reminder to staff (see Figure 3, page 16).

The local learning and skills council will arrange some three monitoring visits each year and you could suggest slotting those visits into your annual review cycle to enable more effective preparation for the review meetings.

Training and communication

Individuals and teams will need training in the tools and techniques of self-assessment. In the first year this is likely to be extensive and urgent. Many lessons will be learned and the review process should pick up issues for training and development in subsequent years. Key areas will include understanding:

- the reasons for and the benefits of self-assessment and development planning
- the processes and timescales you are working to
- the ALI and LSC requirements
- the criteria or standards against which you will make judgements
- common ways of gathering evidence and reporting
- how to make judgements from the evidence
- how to identify strengths and weaknesses and grade provision.

The LSC recognises that if you are new to self-assessment you may need support and your self-assessment will improve over time. Guidance, and in some cases training, will be provided by local LSCs. The ACL Quality Support Programme will run networks and workshops with consultant back-up to help LEAs adapt and embed materials to fit the local context. The section on moderating and validating the SAR (page 26) also suggests practical ways you can learn from other providers or set up internal support for team leaders.

Where the first SAR will not be completed until March 2002, training will inevitably be concentrated into the autumn and winter. If key activities such as observation of teaching and learning are not already in place, you need to think what it is feasible to introduce. This is where early discussion with the appropriate local LSC contact will be helpful. Local LSC staff will be new to aspects of the SAR process as it relates to ACL and engaging in discussion with key external contacts will usually help clarify expectations. It is important to describe what you hope to be able to achieve in the first year, and to state how you aim to improve the self-assessment process in your development plan.

Local authorities who secure provision through contracts

Local authorities who do not manage provision directly, but secure ACL through contracts and service level agreements, face particular challenges. Colleges with whom they work may include LEA-funded adult education in their own self-assessment report. Small community groups may have no experience of self-assessment or may find all the requirements daunting (our guide on self-assessment for small providers, due later this year, will offer further guidance). Your key concern, and one that the LSC and inspectors are likely to be interested in, is what the added value is of the LEA which secures provision. Your starting point could therefore be an analysis of your own quality assurance processes, for example:

- do you work to a common mission statement or long-term plan?
- what do you require in the way of targets and standards?
- how do your quality processes for ACL link with other LEA quality processes (eg for Best Value Performance Planning and Review)?
- how do you support providers with advice and expertise, staff development and sharing good practice?
- how do you monitor ongoing practice and what regular reports do you require?
- how do you evaluate the quality of provision and your own support?

The answers to these questions will be important to include in the introduction to the report as well as helping you sort out the practicalities of drawing together your SAR.

You might consider different ways of gathering the evidence:

- establish the readiness of different providers and use this mapping exercise to plan
- bring the providers together for a brainstorming and briefing meeting
- give or arrange extra support and training for those new to self-assessment
- agree what is manageable and does not detract from the learners' experience
- use simple pro formas to summarise evidence and data that providers might keep in different ways
- undertake sample student feedback (focus groups or surveys)

- visit a sample of classes or get providers to carry out lesson observations using the new grading scheme
- give due space in your report to evidence of providers' quality frameworks, processes and quality awards
- decide how you can use existing self-assessments as evidence for your overall SAR.

Some of the ideas under moderating and verifying (see page 28) can be used at an early stage to encourage the exchange of ideas and the development of common standards and procedures among partners who provide adult education on behalf of the LEA.

Carrying out self-assessment

Gathering the evidence

Self-assessment should become a manageable part of the regular quality assurance processes. The first time it can be daunting but it is important that it does not turn into an end in itself. It should be 'fit for purpose' to suit your organisational goals and your kinds of student. You need evidence to back up your statements, but a lot of that evidence is already available.

Think about the processes learners go through from recruitment, enrolment, initial guidance or assessment, how courses they attend are started and managed, how they get feedback on progress, how they are supported and assessed, and how their achievement is recognised or celebrated. How do you ensure the processes at every stage are consistent across your provision for every learner? What evidence do you have that they are successful?

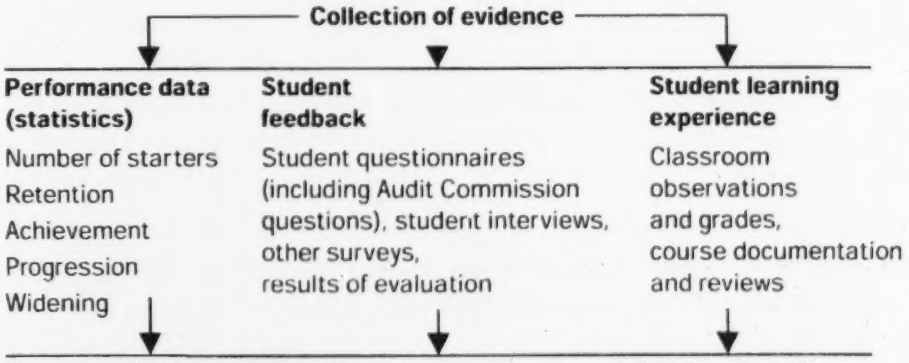
Figure 3 (overleaf) is an example of a successful self-assessment process flowchart.

Use the ALI guidance on how the Common Inspection Framework applies to adult and community learning (www.ali.gov.uk in draft form until 2002). It shows how each question might be interpreted and suggests what kind of evidence is appropriate. You should add your own examples of what applies to **your** learners. Training workshops or team meetings can be a good way of gathering and developing ideas for evidence.

One piece of evidence can be cross-referenced in several parts of the SAR. For example, course reviews could be used as evidence for key areas such as:

- How effective are teaching and training?
- How well do the programmes and courses meet the needs of learners?
- How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?

Figure 3 Self-assessment process flowchart from Essex Adult Education Service



Performance data (statistics)

Number of starters
Retention
Achievement
Progression
Widening

Student feedback

Student questionnaires (including Audit Commission questions), student interviews, other surveys, results of evaluation

Student learning experience

Classroom observations and grades, course documentation and reviews

Annual curriculum review self-assessment reports and development plans

Each curriculum area to produce a report and development plan consisting of:

Identification of strengths and weaknesses based on the following CIF elements

- Achievement and standards
- Teaching, training and learning
- Assessing and monitoring learners' progress
- Resources
- Courses and programmes
- Learner guidance and support

Each curriculum area to be awarded an overall grade

Development plans to be review on three occasions per year

Annual college self-assessment report and development plan

Colleges to produce a college review and development plan consisting of:

- Curriculum review and development plan for each curriculum area
- Review of CIF element – leadership and management (including quality assurance and equal opportunities
- Grades for EO and QA contributing to overall grade for leadership and management
- Overall commentary covering each of the CIF elements
- Development plans to be reviewed on three occasions per year

Annual service self-assessment report consisting of:

- College self-assessment reports
- Overall commentary of how the service meets the CIF elements

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Remember that you do not need to include copies of every piece of evidence in the report. The SAR is a summary, and you should include signposts in the text and cross-referenced evidence at the end, so that the LSC, the Adult Learning Inspectorate or other stakeholders can see it if they want to.

What evidence and hard data will you need?

You will need to support judgements about **learners' achievements and performance**, with statistical and other evidence, possibly with a more qualitative and appropriately adult education orientation, incorporating notions of 'progress' rather than 'progression', 'distance travelled', 'value added' and 'contribution to community development and widening participation', etc on:

- retention, achievement and completion rates
- progress against planned learning outcomes in non-accredited courses
- destinations or progression to other education or training and paid or voluntary employment.

Ways of measuring and comparing learning outcomes on non-accredited programmes are still being addressed by the LSC, the Adult Learning Inspectorate and other interested parties. For up-to-date information about the developing debate see *Squaring the circle: funding non-accredited adult learning under the LSC* (Turner 2001) and *Recognising and validating outcomes of non-accredited learning: a practical approach* (Greenwood *et al.* 2001).

Evidence for judging the **quality of teaching and learning** could include:

- grades and reports on lesson observation
- teachers' schemes of work, lesson plans and record sheets
- learner satisfaction surveys
- course evaluations.

Other evidence about teaching (and resources for teaching) includes:

- induction and support for new tutors
- staff development plans and outcomes, and staff qualifications
- course plans, handbooks and team meetings and reviews.

Evidence of learning could include:

- initial assessment and individual learning plans
- tutors' records of on-course progress reviews
- assessment processes and ways of recording learning outcomes
- exhibitions, performances and community development activities.

The data needed to assess the performance of **learner and other support services** could also be collected from staff and learner satisfaction surveys. Internal or external quality standards (like the Guidance Standards) are also appropriate evidence for the effectiveness of such services.

Records of **trends in performance over time** are expected by both the Adult Learning Inspectorate and the LSC. They will include:

- trends in recruitment, retention and achievement across provision over the past 3 years
- performance against agreed targets
- where possible comparing against other providers (benchmarking).

It is likely that much of this data is not yet available, so you should indicate that it is a priority in your development plan.

The Adult Learning Inspectorate and LSC also expect to see how you address **participation in learning from under-represented groups** and target setting to close equality gaps in participation and achievement. Data to help with this can be obtained from ward statistics held by council planning offices and then be compared with learner postcode locations. The most up-to-date information will be available when the 2001 Census data is published. The LSC should also support you by providing local data on equal opportunities and discussing with you how you can contribute to their participation targets.

Figure 4

Examples of statistical data that could be prepared by an adult education provider

Table 1 Retention rates: 3-year comparison

	1999/2000			1998/99			1997/98		
	Start	Finish	%	Start	Finish	%	Start	Finish	%
Accredited	2203	1712	78	2271	1725	76	1600	1126	70
Non-accredited	10966	9821	90	10085	9152	91	10303	9303	90
Total	**13169**	**11533**	**88**	**12356**	**10877**	**88**	**11903**	**10429**	**88**

The above table could be repeated to show the performance for each area of learning, curriculum or programme area, or if appropriate by location.

Table 2 Proposed retention targets for 2000/01

	Start 1999/2000	Finish 1999/2000	Target for 2000/01
Accredited	2203	1712 (78%)	80%
Non-accredited	10966	9821 (90%)	91%
Total	**13169**	**11533 (88%)**	**89%**

Retention targets will also be set for each curriculum area and beyond that at course level.

Table 3 Achievement accredited/examination provision

		Certificate entries	Growth over previous year	Certificate successes	Success rate
All curriculum areas	1999/2000	668	25%	611	91%
	1998/99	535	189%	486	91%
	1997/98	184	—	172	93%

Table 4 Observation of teaching and learning grades and national benchmarks

	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Total provision (%)	17	53	28	2	0
National average (%)	17	45	31	6	0

The above is based on observations conducted in 1999/2000 and compared with the national average for all inspected colleges by FEFC in 1999/2000.

Interpreting data

What does the data in Figure 4 tell you?

As you begin to become more effective in collecting performance data year on year, evidence will emerge on how you are doing within your own organisation and in comparison with others. Inevitably the concept of 'continuous improvement' will become more tangible and as a result your organisation's confidence and focus should improve. The data in Figure 4 indicates:

- **Table 1** – there has been a significant increase in enrolments from 1997 to 1999 on accredited courses, with an increase overall in enrolments on non-accredited programmes over the same period despite a slight decline in 1998/99. Completion on accredited programmes rose significantly from 1998 to 1999, but declined slightly from 1999 to 2000. In contrast, there was a steady upward trend of completions on non-accredited programmes from 1998 to 2000. For both enrolment and completion overall, there was a steady upward trend. However, although volume of enrolments and completions went up, retention as an annual percentage of enrolment against completion remained static. The provider concerned could go further and compare these rates with those available on national retention. Currently, this would mean looking at FEFC data for colleges and further education, which will continue to be on the LSC website until new data for post-16 learning becomes available.
- **Table 2** – Retention rates for 2000/01 have been set with small percentage increases overall. Particular curriculum areas might be set higher targets to move close to or above national averages. What is desirable may not always be feasible in the short term.
- **Table 3** – Significant growth in qualification entries has taken place and success rates are high and maintained even with increased entry. There was a particularly sharp increase in entries from 1997/98 to 1998/99.
- **Table 4** – 70% of lessons observed were rated outstanding or good (grades 1 or 2) which is well above the national average. This would indicate a strength to be noted in the SAR.

Looking further than the figures

There will be other information to convey as a result of the data gathered that is not immediately revealed in the tables:

- In Table 1 the provider had a strategy for growth and could indicate the particular curriculum areas and courses that were targeted and the further actions taken to ensure increased enrolment.
- In Table 3 the provider decided to encourage more learners to enter for the qualification, when normally just attending and completing would have been the norm. More detail on the strategy could be provided in the narrative to the SAR.

Drafting the report

Involving staff

Part-time, as well as full-time, staff in adult education are encouraged to be 'reflective practitioners'. It is easier if there have been regular lesson observation or reviews, but it is still possible to set up peer reviews or team meetings. Information provided by individuals needs to be gathered together in a team report. These teams could comprise curriculum groups linked to areas of learning or specialist functions (for example, guidance or centre management).

Each team should have a leader to plan and manage the team self-assessment process and to take responsibility for bringing together the report in the form required. In large ACL providers a number of course reports in the same subject area might be produced and contribute to a larger curriculum area report. In languages, for example, the final report could be built up from information provided by the range of courses in French, German, Spanish, Italian and so on.

If you are a team leader responsible for drafting a section of the SAR it is important to set meetings with others in good time for completion of tasks. However hard you try to convey to others the need to be on time with data, there are often unforeseen problems. Start work as early as possible and set team meetings to review progress regularly. This is often easier after the first year, but if there is a review cycle in place use it to build up the information and analysis with others.

You will need to provide clear guidelines. Where several people will be writing parts of the full report the guidelines will help you compile the information in a similar format and save time pulling together the final copy. It is a good discipline to limit each team/area of learning to one or two pages.

To help teams build up the information needed and to ensure consistency some providers use a reporting pro forma. Figure 5 shows the first page of such a pro forma using each of the seven key questions from the Common Inspection Framework (see Figure 2) as the starting point and building in the additional LSC requirements. In key question 1, for example, the LSC requirement is prompted by asking for the data on retention, completion, achievement and progression. The Essex Adult Education Service *Self assessment handbook* (April 2001) contains another possible format.

Figure 5 Self-assessment report pro forma

Department/centre

ALI area(s) of learning

How well do learners achieve?

Key strengths	Sources of evidence

Key weaknesses	Sources of evidence

Overall comment and judgement
(attach relevant data to meet LSC requirements)

Grade

Priorities for action

Signed Date

Judging strengths and weaknesses

You only need to highlight **key** strengths and weaknesses, not list all of them.

Both the LSC and Adult Learning Inspectorate will look at your evidence to decide whether it provides adequate justification for the strength or weakness claimed. As a general guide, robust evidence is:

- **valid** – evidence directly supports the strength or weakness identified and not something else
- **quantifiable** – using internal and external performance indicators where these exist
- **sufficient** – selective or incomplete evidence can give a false picture
- **current** – recent enough to give an accurate position at the time of writing
- **accurate** – verifiable from named sources of evidence.

Staff writing SARs often have difficulty distinguishing between real strengths and what you would expect to be normal practice. FEFC and Training Standards Council (TSC) inspection reports would often indicate that the organisation had overstated strengths. For example:

There are good working relationships between teachers and learners.

If there were not good relationships would this be a weakness? Yes. So this is a norm.

Another common problem is simply stating facts rather than making a judgement. When writing statements to support a strength or a weakness it is important to use a word or a phrase that is clearly evaluative. For example:

*In **many** lessons teachers pay **insufficient** attention to the individual needs of students in the planning and delivery of sessions.*

It is often helpful to apply the questioning technique 'so what?' after writing statements to check that you have included evaluative words or judgements. The statement below is vague or non-committal:

Some of the students' social facilities could be improved.

Which facilities? How serious is the problem? The statement is more evaluative if written:

*Refreshment facilities for students at the **Main Centre are poor**.*

Figure 6 gives further examples of how to improve statements of strengths and weaknesses in reports.

Figure 6

Evaluative judgements: improving on statements of weakness and strength in self-assessment reports

Statement noting problems	**Possible adaptation**
A quality assurance system operates across the organisation ▪ *This is a statement of fact and not an evaluative judgement* ▪ *It is non-committal and vague* ▪ *It is a norm and not a strength. (If there were no quality assurance system this would be a weakness)* ▪ *There is no impact*	Well-established, carefully monitored 'quality assurance' arrangements are applied rigorously and consistently, leading to 100% completion of course reviews and action plans
Some teachers' session plans do not appear to address how all learners are included in the learning process ▪ *This is vague and non-committal* ▪ *There is no impact*	40% of session plans in tutors' teaching files did not address how all learners are actively involved in learning. This was a factor in student withdrawal in 20 investigated instances
There is a file of fully minuted teaching team meetings ▪ *This is a statement of fact* ▪ *It is a norm. (If it did not exist this would be a weakness)*	Well-minuted monthly meetings of all teaching teams address emerging issues promptly with outcomes that are reviewed at future meetings and shared across the service
Student achievement on the course is high ▪ *It is rather vague* ▪ *It lacks impact*	Achievement on the course has consistently improved, exceeding national level 2 benchmarks by 10% over the last 4 years and contributing to its strong expansion
All learners receive course handbooks and diaries ▪ *It is a statement of fact and not an evaluative judgement* ▪ *It could in many circumstances be a norm. (If learners did not receive handbooks that could be considered a weakness)* ▪ *It lacks impact. What is the consequence?*	All learners receive timely (in some cases pre-course), relevant and informative course handbooks with full assessment schedules, which students report usefully assist them in planning their work

Moderating and validating the self-assessment report and grades

You need to ensure consistency in your report by making sure that the same criteria are applied to judgements made in different parts of the organisation.

One of the most difficult things in self-assessment is to be honest about the balance of strengths and weaknesses, and this also applies to deciding on grades. The grade criteria are still very broad and the Adult Learning Inspectorate will build up their own benchmarks over time. You therefore have to make the best judgement you can, taking into account not just the number of strengths and weaknesses but their relative importance.

The Inspectorate's five point scale for areas of learning and leadership and seven point scale for lesson observation are given in Figure 7 (opposite).

If you are setting up a new lesson observation scheme it would make sense to choose this scale (our next publication in this series covers managing the observation of teaching and learning).

Avoid the temptation to pretend you are better than you are. Even in FEFC inspections (where colleges were experienced at self-assessment) a significant proportion gave higher grades than the inspectorate. If you are honest about weaknesses and show how you plan to tackle them in a development plan, you have a better chance of getting supportive feedback from the LSC and the Adult Learning Inspectorate.

Apart from using materials available in training, there are several ways you can work from 'real examples' to moderate your judgements and grades. Choose methods that work for your kind of organisation.

Figure 7

Scales for grading learning and leadership, and lesson observation

Five point scale for areas of learning and leadership	**Seven point scale for lesson observation**
1 Outstanding	1 Excellent
	2 Very good
2 Good	3 Good
3 Satisfactory	4 Satisfactory
4 Unsatisfactory	5 Unsatisfactory
5 Very weak	6 Poor
	7 Very poor

Internal checks and balances:

- encourage staff to self-audit their evidence and statements of strengths and weaknesses using the guidance above
- encourage staff to swap reports and comment on each other's SARs and grades, asking challenging questions
- do spot checks on the evidence or organise an internal mock inspection
- check your report and grades against other evidence (eg assessment for other quality frameworks or awards)
- present draft reports to committees, partners, student or staff groups for comment.

Using outside information to moderate your judgements:

- attend networks and training events so you can begin to see how your self-assessment matches that of others
- look at the inspection reports on the ALI website to see what they judge to be key strengths and weaknesses and why they award grades; some training providers cover some of the same areas of work as adult education, and familiar areas (like foundation studies or IT) are a good place to start.

Using outside help:

- set up a partner/buddy exercise with a neighbouring or friendly provider and help each other out by exchanging SARs or doing sample observations
- ask a provider who has had more experience in self-assessment (eg a college or designated adult education provider inspected by FEFC) to look at parts of the report where you have concerns
- employ a consultant to give you honest feedback and to verify, for example, lesson observation grades
- last, but not least, ask the LSC staff for support; their role is to help you improve, not just to monitor performance.

Editing and proof-reading

If the planning has been effective the reports from teams and individuals will arrive in a common format that should aid writing the final version. If this can be facilitated electronically a lot of the work will have been done. The key task then is to bring it together to read logically, edit accordingly and proof-read for errors.

You need to think about the purpose of the report and the audience it is addressing in deciding how much additional information to include. Include the key data on performance, benchmarking (where possible), management information and outcomes of learner and other surveys. But remember that SARs are, in effect, summaries, with evidence referenced and accessible (some of it in appendices). The inspectors and LSC staff will want to see clear references to where they can get access to the evidence. They will not have time to look at it all in detail.

It is possible that teams will have more data and written up information that will be relevant for the team but not the whole report. Teams can therefore keep the data on course reviews, learner evaluation and so on, with summaries included in the final document.

Be sure that a final approval and signing off process is included. Usually the most senior person in the organisation should do this and take responsibility for any errors or inaccuracies.

Publishing and sharing the report

You need to think about whether you want to have full and shorter versions. Full versions will include all the sections and appendices and can run into many pages. In deciding how many copies to print of the full version you need to consider who will read and use such a lengthy document.

Shorter versions might be needed for a variety of reasons. After undertaking such a significant activity it is important to keep those who contributed informed. There will also be others you will want to inform and a summary version could be considered for them.

Possible copies and audience:

- **full version with all appendices** – for all full-time staff, LSC, LEA or parent body
- **department or curriculum section** – for staff who contributed and need to review and plan
- **summary version** – for all staff, copies available for students, external organisations who may have an interest (particularly when reporting on or bidding for contracts).

The next step – development planning

By highlighting strengths and weaknesses, self-assessment will help you identify areas for improvement. If nothing is done about these, self-assessment will not contribute to continuous improvement. The development plan shows how you expect to improve by addressing those weaknesses and building on your strengths.

The LSC requires providers to produce an annual development plan with their self-assessment report. Where ACL providers are waiting until the end of March 2002 to produce their first SAR, discussion with the local LSC will help clarify the period the development plan should cover before you complete your second SAR, probably at the end of the academic year.

The local LSC has to approve the development plan and may ask you for amendments. LSC staff will monitor progress against the activities and targets set out in the development plans. After inspection you will be asked to update the development plan, taking into account the inspectors' findings, and this will be agreed with LSC. A separate post-inspection plan is needed where provision needs to be reinspected.

Identifying the critical issues

When you have worked through the drafting and writing of the SAR, and have reviewed the performance and other data, you should be familiar with the issues that are causing concern and will already have some action points. You will need to:

- review the strengths and weaknesses
- involve the staff and others who have contributed to or commented on the SAR
- decide which actions will benefit the learners most and prioritise these
- make sure your improvement strategy fits in with LSC targets and national priorities, such as 'basic skills'
- make sure targets fit in with other plans (eg Adult Learning Plan, Best Value action plan).

There may be some priorities that leap out from the pages of the SAR; weaknesses associated with evidence of **learning and attainment** and **key performance data**. You will not be able to address all the weaknesses immediately, so focus on what is:

- manageable
- urgent to rectify
- important to improve.

It is a good idea to include some actions that offer a chance for staff and students to see a difference quickly. But there may be deeper problems needing a longer term strategy and for these you will need to build a staged plan that may give benefits over a number of years.

A series of meetings might be necessary in larger providers to hear the views of teams and to identify key weaknesses and strengths in different parts of the report, which can then be dealt with by common approaches across the service.

Some actions can be tackled effectively by individual teams, particularly building on a strength or good practice in one area that can be implemented elsewhere. There will also be actions requiring development across the whole service; careful consideration of what different parts of the organisation can contribute in the year ahead is necessary.

It is important to involve people who have responsibilities for putting together this year's and next year's self-assessment report in implementing the improvement strategy.

Drawing up the plan

The development plan should be set out in tabular format and conform to the LSC criteria (Appendix 4). There is no standard form but the plan should specify:

- areas to be improved
- the strengths and weaknesses they relate to
- the priority (high, medium, low)
- actions to be undertaken
- targets for improvement in each area
- responsibilities for carrying out actions
- agreed timescales
- arrangements for monitoring that actions are on track and reviewing the plan.

You will need to set clear objectives and targets for improvement, with success criteria for judging the outcomes rather than generalised aims. The objectives should be SMART:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Results-orientated
- Time-bound

SMART**ER** targets also include:

- Evaluation and Review

Knowing something is a weakness does not automatically mean you can put it right. The first stage is to understand the **causes** of the weakness so you can think of ways to address it. The next question to ask is 'how is this activity going to make a difference?'.

A simple improvement may need only a straightforward action with an end date. But most will be more complex and will need to be broken down into steps. Figure 8 shows a plan to address a weakness where only 20% of part-time tutors had been observed teaching.

Figure 8 Example of development plan in tabular format (example of addressing a weakness)

Weakness identified in self-assessment report:
Only 20% of part-time tutors are recorded as having been observed teaching

Action	Outcome/target	Timescale and milestones
▫ *Are these actions specific and detailed?* ▫ *Does each one directly address the issue?* ▫ *Will they collectively bring about the desired improvement?* ▫ *Will you have evidence of this?*	▫ *How will you know the action has happened?*	▫ *When will you take stock?* ▫ *When is the deadline for completion?*
1 The system for observing and assessing all teaching staff will be thoroughly investigated	A new system will be incorporated into the staff handbook and observers trained	September 2001
Staff development days will be run to train assessors and part-time tutors in the new arrangements	100% new part-time staff briefed at induction and 75% of other part-time staff attending training in year 1	March 2002
2 Part-time tutors will be observed in their first year (or term in the case of teachers of short courses) All part-time teachers will be observed at least once every 2 years	All new staff and 50% of existing part-time staff will be observed in the first year with records signed and kept securely in each centre	June 2002
3 The system will be reviewed after the first year	All assessors attend review meetings and new guidelines issued	August 2002

Development plan for: *Insert here the area requiring improvement or consolidation*
Example: *Establish lesson observation scheme* **Priority:** *High*

Person responsible	**Monitoring, evaluation and reporting arrangements**	**Progress/ completion**	**Success criteria**
▪ *Who leads on each action?*	▪ *How will you monitor and document progress?* ▪ *Who do you need to report to and how will you do this?*	▪ *How often is progress noted?* ▪ *Who 'signs off' the action?* ▪ *What if actions are not completed and/ or further action is needed? Who modifies the plan?*	▪ *How will you know the action has been effective?* ▪ *Has it made a difference?*
Quality manager (with curriculum leaders and staff development coordinator)		Action plans following each review meeting	90% of tutors observed will report positive benefits from the system training and participate knowledgeably and confidently in the system
Curriculum team leaders	Termly review meetings between quality manager, staff development coordinator, selected heads of centre, coordinators and part-time staff representatives	Quality manager chases missed actions and revises action plans	Student feedback on teaching will be positive compared to previous years. Observation grades improve year on year
Quality manager with team leaders	Reports of meetings and observations to quality manager	Review meetings modify plan Head of service signs off new guidelines	ALI grades at the next inspection will be above the benchmark for the sector

Figure 8 has three clear stages, which are relevant to tackling many areas:

- preparing – developing staff skills so you have the capacity to make the improvement
- planning and implementing the strategy – a series of actions and targets
- reviewing the strategy – monitoring how it is going and adjusting if necessary.

Figure 8 also includes prompt questions (in *italics*) to help you check your plan is likely to be effective.

Monitoring the plan

You will need to set milestones for completion of tasks (avoid the word 'ongoing') to help ensure that the plan stays on track, or can be updated, in consultation with the LSC, who will want to discuss it in their regular review meetings.

It is a good idea to have different people responsible for implementing and monitoring the plan (unless you are a very small organisation). This can help staff see the plan as a working document and give them someone with whom they can discuss how the implementation is going. It will help them to:

- understand if the plan needs to be changed
- see progress is happening and celebrate improvements
- set new targets
- review how it fits in with their other plans and responsibilities.

You will also want to evaluate how effective your actions have been. The key questions will be:

- Have the actions led to the desired improvements?
- Have the actions benefited the learners?
- Have there been any unintended outcomes?

Reviewing the process

After undertaking self-assessment for the first time you will have learned many lessons. Reviewing the process is important so you can put in place changes and streamline processes for the year ahead. Build in time for this review process and if possible establish a way of recording issues as they come up during the year or when undertaking key activities in the process. The nearer you are to the problem the more likely you are to remember the change you want to recommend.

Review could be discussed in full-time staff meetings; part-time tutors might be invited to respond to a questionnaire or share their experiences at regular reviews. A paper-based capturing of key thoughts of those involved would be helpful and could be designed around simple statements such as:

- What went well?
- What didn't go well?
- What changes are needed?

To make self-assessment and development planning a positive experience you may like to consider strategies for rewarding improvements in performance. Where can you find opportunities for sharing findings and best practice?

Initially, self-assessment and development planning may be done to meet the requirements of external agencies (the inspectors and the LSC), but it will be of most benefit if it forms a regular and integrated part of your quality assurance processes. After the formidable work to pull together your first self-assessment report, subsequent years will be much easier, as you will be reviewing and adjusting an existing framework. The ultimate test is whether your capacity for self-assessment and improvement is enhanced as a result of participation in the process.

Appendix 1

ALI/Ofsted areas of learning and inspection

With examples of adult education courses

Note: see www.ali.gov.uk for a comprehensive listing

Area 1
Sciences and mathematics

Mathematics and sciences, including physics, chemistry, biology and geology. Environmental and conservation studies

Area 2
Land-based provision

Flower arranging, horticulture, animal care, gardening, fishing, environmental practice

Area 3
Construction

Construction trades and crafts, including DIY, mechanical and engineering services, home maintenance, woodwork

Area 4
Engineering, technology and manufacturing

Car/cycle maintenance, chemical, energy, electrical/electronic and mechanical engineering, welding

Area 5
Business administration, management and professional

All aspects of business administration and management, business English, accounts, assessor/teacher/trainer awards, marketing, public speaking, self-employment, trade union studies

Area 6
Information and communication technology

Computer studies, programming/software, website design, office software use, DTP, CAD and keyboarding skills

Area 7
Retailing, customer service and transportation

Customer care, driving, yachting

Area 8
Hospitality, sports, leisure and travel

Cake decoration, catering, cooking, bridge, chess, exercise and fitness, outdoor activities, recreational sports, self-defence, yoga

Area 9
Hairdressing and beauty therapy

Hairdressing, beauty therapy, massage, therapeutic techniques (Alexander technique, aromatherapy)

Area 10
Health, social care and public services

Care/health, counselling, early years, parenting, pre-retirement, bereavement, assertiveness, playwork, sign language

Area 11
Visual and performing arts and media

Art and design, crafts, ceramics, carving, dressmaking, embroidery, weaving, photography. Performing arts/theatre, music, dance. journalism, media/video/ radio/printing, design

Area 12
Humanities

General studies, history, genealogy, sociology, psychology, geography, law. Religious studies/comparative religions, philosophy, classics, ancient languages. Access to HE

Area 13
English, languages and communications

English, communications, writing, French/German/ Italian/Spanish etc, community languages, EFL

Area 14
Foundation programmes

Employability programmes, foundation studies, life skills, basic skills, key skills, ESOL, programmes for those with learning disabilities. Return-to-work and vocational skills

Appendix 2

LSC criteria for effective self-assessment

The LSC/ES set out criteria in *Raising standards in post-16 learning: self assessment and development plans* (DfES 2001). These are collated and summarised below.

Effective self-assessment:

▫ Encourages staff at all levels of the organisation to evaluate their performance	*Paras 39 & 50*
▫ Involves learners, employers and other customers in the process	*Paras 50 & 53*
▫ Deals with all aspects of the organisation's activity, in particular the quality of learners' experience and standards they achieve	*Paras 40, 50 & 53*
▫ Addresses all the quality statements and answers all the key questions in the Common Inspection Framework. Addresses related aspects of quality and financial probity set out by the LSC/ES	*Paras 6, 36 & 37*
▫ Is honest, objective and evaluative using agreed criteria	*Paras 50 & 53*
▫ Uses clear evidence to support judgements	*Paras 50 & 53*
▫ Makes effective use of performance data including benchmarks and management information	*Paras 50 & 53*
▫ Arranges for the report to be approved by head of service, principal or director and endorsed by governing body or board members where appropriate	*Para 50*
▫ Is an integral part of strategic and operational planning and quality assurance arrangements	*Paras 45 & 50*
▫ Leads to action in the development plan	*Para 50*

The structure of the report should:

▫ As far as possible be similar to that of published inspection reports	*Para 51*

Appendix 3

Preparing for self-assessment and development planning: a checklist

The page references tell you where to look in this guide for more information. Some topics, however, are covered in different sections.

Key: **A** Very confident on this and work is well in hand

B Haven't done much on this yet, but we know what we need to do and how to go about it

C We still need to do a lot of work on this

Page	**Setting up and consulting**	Circle one
10	We are clear about who is managing and coordinating the process	A B C
8	We have read and understand LSC and CIF requirements	A B C
15	We have read the ALI draft guidance for ACL and can apply it to our work	A B C
10	We have briefed all involved – eg management committees, staff, student representatives and partner organisations, about the self-assessment	A B C
22	We have decided how to organise the SA process – eg by centre, budget area, department	A B C
22	We have set up teams to produce mini SARs for their areas	A B C
22	Part-time tutors have been briefed on their part in the process	A B C
16	We have a timetable or flowchart with milestones for preparing the SAR	A B C
	Common approaches	
13	We have a quality assurance system which is clearly documented and applied throughout the service	A B C
12	Training and support have been organised for SAR team-leaders	A B C
11	We have a regular system of classroom observation	A B C
17	We grade all our observations and these grades have been collated and analysed	A B C
17	All tutors have course files with schemes of work, session plans and summaries of evaluations	A B C
18	We have records of the guidance and support given to learners	A B C

Page	**Feedback systems**	Circle one		
10	We have regular feedback and evaluations from students	A	B	C
10	Recent and detailed feedback from students will be included in the SAR	A	B	C
10	The views of community groups and other stakeholders are taken into account	A	B	C
	Evidence and performance data			
18	Our participation and retention data is up to date on all classes	A	B	C
22	We have analysed it by LSC programme area as well as by our team areas	A	B	C
17	We have evidence of achievement (or learning gain) for all learners whether on accredited or on non-accredited programmes	A	B	C
17	Evidence of progression has been collected	A	B	C
20	We have made comparisons with a) other providers b) previous years	A	B	C
	Moderation			
26	A moderation group or process has been set up	A	B	C
28	We have arranged ways for teams to cross-check their SARs	A	B	C
28	Outside help is being used to improve our SAR	A	B	C
	Compiling the report			
22	Content of the SAR is organised under agreed headings and key data	A	B	C
22	The SAR fits the needs of our organisation and students as well as LSC and ALI requirements	A	B	C
22	Each self-assessment team is identifying action points	A	B	C
29	We have agreed the circulation for consultation on the final draft	A	B	C
	Development planning			
32	Areas for improvement build directly on strengths and address weaknesses identified	A	B	C
33	The development plan has a clear structure and targets	A	B	C
33	The plan sets out timescales and responsibilities for implementing the plan	A	B	C
32	The LSC and key stakeholders have been consulted on their priorities	A	B	C
32	The plan takes into account national priorities such as widening participation	A	B	C
32	The plan fits in with our other planning cycles and strategic priorities	A	B	C
37	Responsibilities for review and review dates have been agreed	A	B	C

Appendix 4

LSC criteria for effective development planning

The LSC/ES criteria in *Raising standards in post-16 learning: self assessment and development plans* (DfES 2001) are collated and summarised below.

Effective development plans:

- Are manageable in their scope — *Paras 55 & 56*
- Link explicitly to all actions arising from the self-assessment report — *Para 57*
- Prioritise activities to address the self-assessment report on the basis of: — *Paras 55 & 57*
  - taking forward those areas for improvement which are paramount to the learner and need to be addressed immediately
  - consolidating strengths
  - rectifying weaknesses
  - identifying areas for improvement to pursue in the long term and for which careful planning is essential
- Take account of national and local priorities — *Para 58*
- Include targets for improvement — *Para 57*
- Clearly specify the actions to be taken, with costings where appropriate — *Para 57*
- Identify expected outcomes of specific actions and criteria for judging whether actions have been carried out successfully — *Para 57*
- Identify those responsible for ensuring actions are carried out — *Para 57*
- Give timescales for completion of each action with milestones where appropriate — *Para 59*
- Set out arrangements for monitoring, evaluating and reporting on progress — *Para 57*
- Indicate involvement of key partners in drawing up, reviewing and evaluating plan — *Para 57*
- Provide a sound basis for bringing about improvement — *Para 55*

Appendix 5 Further sources of information and advice

Publications

ALI. *Draft guidance on inspection for ACL providers – interpreting the Common Inspection Framework*. ALI website, 2001.

ALI/Ofsted. *Common Inspection Framework*. ALI/Ofsted websites, February 2001.

Cox P, Moorse R. *Continuous improvement in post-16 learning – self-assessment and development planning*. LSC/LSDA, 2001 forthcoming.

Overarching guidance for all providers

DfEE (now DfES)/LSC/ES. *Raising standards in post-16 learning: self assessment and development plans*. LSC website, March 2001.

Explains LSC requirements and quality improvement strategy

DfES. *Raising standards – guidance on self-assessment and development planning for training providers*. DfES, 2001 forthcoming.

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Case studies and research on colleges using self-assessment to improve practice

Essex Adult Education Service. *Self assessment handbook*. Essex Adult Education Service, April 2001.

FEDA. *Self-assessment in practice*. FEDA (now LSDA), 1998.

A practical guide and supporting video for colleges on how to self-assess

FEFC. *Effective self assessment*. FEFC, 1999.

A survey of college self-assessment with pointers for good practice

Greenwood M, Merton A and Taylor S. *Recognising and validating outcomes of non-accredited learning: a practical approach*. LSDA, 2001.

Merton A. *Thematic Review of LEA Adult Learning Plans*. 2001.

Turner C. *Squaring the circle: funding non-accredited adult learning under the LSC*. NIACE, 2001.

Useful websites

www.ali.gov.uk

Adult Learning Inspectorate. Site includes draft guidance for providers on what the CIF means to different providers

www.lsc.gov.uk

The Learning and Skills Council

www.LSDA.org.uk

Learning and Skills Development Agency.
Research and development supporting the sector

www.niace.org.uk

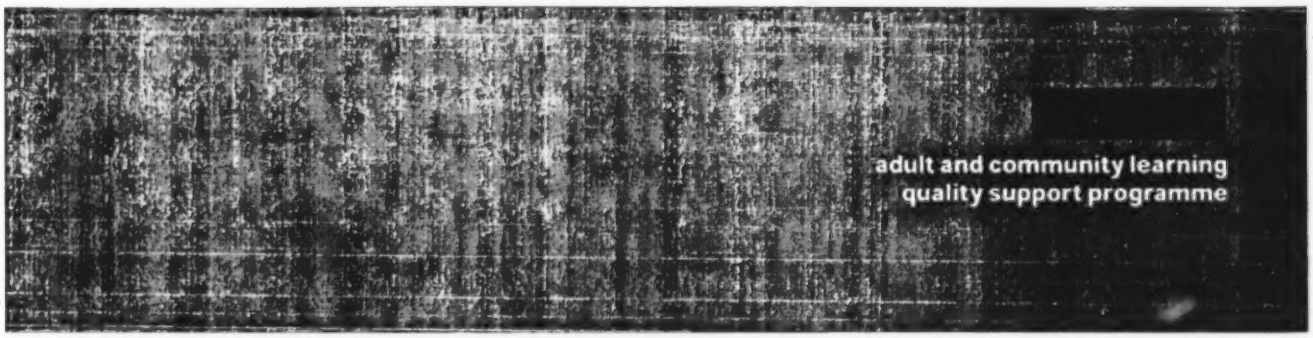
NIACE. The national organisation for adult learning

www.ofsted.gov.uk

Ofsted. The Office for Standards in Education

www.qualityACL.org.uk

The LSDA/NIACE quality support programme for ACL.
Information, publications and pro formas you can download



Adult and community learning (ACL) services need to meet the challenges of the new post-16 learning sector. New requirements from the Learning and Skills Council and Adult Learning Inspectorate mean they must produce an annual self-assessment of the quality of their provision and a development plan to show how they will improve.

This guide sets out the steps needed for successful completion of a self-assessment report and development plan. It is designed to inform senior managers, curriculum leaders and adminstrators and can also be used to support staff training and to help design internal documents and procedures.

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